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THE SEASONAL RESIDENCES OF THE GREAT KHAN ÖGEDEI*

by
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Both Juvainī and Rašīd al-Dīn have described in some detail the seasonal movements of the Great Khan Ögedei from one residence or encampment to the next. By collating the data in their accounts with references in the *Yüan shih* and in the *Travels* of John de Plano Carpini and William of Rubruck I have endeavoured to identify the various stages of his annual itinerary, which seems also to have been followed by his successors Güyük and Möngke.

The first month of spring, i.e. from the 21st March to the 21st April, he spent, according to Juvainī,¹ at Qara-Qorum in the famous palace which he and Rašīd al-Dīn² call by its Mongol name of Qarši³ but which the Chinese, who built it, called Wan-an kung ("Myriad Tranquillities Palace").⁴ From Qarši he proceeded to another palace built by Muslim craftsmen to which Juvainī⁵ gives the name of Qarši Sūri, i.e. apparently the "qarši of Sa'uri"⁶, where he would remain for about 40 days, i.e. till the end of May. In front of this palace were pools of water – the Turkish name, says Juvainī,⁷ is *köl*- in which waterfowl used to gather and Ögedei would amuse

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¹ *HWC*, p. 237.

² *HWC*, p. 219, Blochet, p. 48, *Successors*, p. 62.

³ Strictly speaking, a Turkish loanword. See Doerfer, III, No. 1460 (pp. 442–443).

⁴ See Cleaves 1952, pp. 25 and 27.

⁵ *HWC*, p. 237.

⁶ The Sao-lin (Sa'urin) of the *Yüan shih*, a „city,” built in 1237, where the Gegen Čayan pavilion was erected. See Cleaves 1952, p. 27.

⁷ *HWC*, p. 237.

himself with watching the hunting of these birds. Obviously referring to this same building Rašid al-Dīn⁸ remarks that it was “a day’s journey from Qara-Qorum to a place where in ancient times were the falconers of Afrāsiyāb.” The name of the place appears in the MSS. of Rašid al-Dīn used by Blochet as سر جاغان whence the Kertchagan of d’Ohsson⁹ and Howorth¹⁰ and the Kerchagan of Rockhill¹¹ and Olschki.¹² Verkhovsky,¹³ in his translation of Rašid al-Dīn, has adopted this reading (Karčagan), though his own text has کهز جاغان, which is much nearer to an original چاغان *Gegen Čayan. This is the name given to the locality in the *Yüan shih*, which mentions both the pavilion itself, the Chia-chien Ch’a-han (Gegen Čayan [“Bright and White”]) tien, built in 1237,¹⁴ and the pools or marshes, the Chieh-chieh-ch’a-ha (Gege[n] Čaya[n]) che, where Ögedei fell ill in the spring of 1241.¹⁵ Gegen Čayan was situated 70–odd *li* (about 25 miles) north of Qara-Qorum. It was, as Rašid al-Dīn has already told us, “a place where in ancient times were the falconers of Afrāsiyāb.” Now Afrāsiyāb is identified by Juvaini¹⁶ with Būgü Khan, the legendary ruler of the Uiγur. I would suggest therefore that Gegen Čayan was somewhere in the vicinity of the old Uiγur capital of Ordu-Baliq (Qara-Balyasun), which lay on the left bank of the Orkhon, 70 *li* (i.e. about the same distance) north of Qara-Qorum.¹⁷

At the beginning of June Ögedei would be back in Qara-Qorum and would pass a few days in Qarši. Then, continuing on his way “he would go to a small palace which he had built on a hilltop three miles from the town . . .”¹⁸ This is a reference to a village called

⁸ Blochet, p. 49, *Successors*, p. 63.

⁹ II, p. 84.

¹⁰ I, p. 158.

¹¹ p. 223, note 2.

¹² p. 17.

¹³ p. 41.

¹⁴ Cleaves 1952, pp. 25 and 27.

¹⁵ D’Ohsson, II, p. 86. “*Yüan shih*, 2, 7b (Annals of T’ai-tsung) says: “Thirteenth year, *hsing-ch’ou*. In the second month in spring (14 March–12 April 1241), while hunting at the marshes of Chieh-chieh-ch’a-ha, the Emperor (i.e. T’ai-tsung or Ögedei) became ill. An edict was issued granting an amnesty to [all] the prisoners in the realm. The Emperor regained his health.” I am indebted for this reference to Dr. Igor de Rachewiltz of the Australian National University, who points out that the word *che* “marsh(es)” can also be translated as “pond(s), lake(s).”

¹⁶ *HWC*, p. 54.

¹⁷ Yule, I, p. 228.

¹⁸ *HWC*, p. 238.

Tuzγu-Baliq (T. *tuzγu* "offering of food to travellers" and *baliq* "town") built, according to the *Yüan shih*, in 1238, the actual pavilion bearing the Chinese name of *Ying chia tien* ("Welcome Carriage Hall"),¹⁹ Elsewhere²⁰ Juvaini says that Tuzγu-Baliq lay two parasangs (about seven miles, to the east of the town. Rašid al-Dīn²¹ gives the same distance, while, according to the *Yüan shih*²² it was 30-odd *li* (over 10 miles) from Qara-Qorum.

At Tuzγu-Baliq the Great Khan would stay for four or five weeks, i. e. until some time in July, and would then "go into the mountains, where there would be erected for him a Khitayan pavilion, whose walls were made of latticed wood, ceiling was of gold while its embroidered cloth, and it was covered all over with white felt: it is called Shira-Ordu. In these parts there are cool waters and much grass."²³ This mountainous area was, according to Rašid al-Dīn,²⁴ called اورمکتو or اورمکتو d'Ohsson's²⁵ Ormektoua. It is the Örmegetü mentioned in the *Altan Tobči*²⁶ as the place in which Güyük ascended the throne of the Khanate. It is strange that the name does not occur in any of the older Far Eastern sources. As for Šira-Ordu, it is described by Rašid al-Dīn²⁷ in somewhat different terms as being "a great tent which held a thousand persons and was never struck. The outside was adorned with gold studs and the inside covered with *nasij*." It should be noted that John de Plano Carpini speaks of three different pavilions: Sira-Orda, "a great tent made of white purple,"²⁸ which in our opinion was large enough to hold more than two thousand persons; and around it a wooden paling had been made, and it was ornamented with divers designs;²⁹ the Golden Orda (presumably M. *Altan Orda*), which "rested on pillars covered with gold plates, fastened with gold nails and other woods, and the top and sides of it were covered with baldakins; the outside, how-

¹⁹ Cleaves 1952, pp. 25 and 27-28.

²⁰ *HWC*, p. 213.

²¹ Blochet, p. 49.

²² Cleaves 1952, p. 25.

²³ *HWC*, p. 239, substituting "it" for "this place."

²⁴ Blochet, p. 49.

²⁵ II, p. 84.

²⁶ p. 147.

²⁷ Blochet, p. 49, *Successors*, p. 63.

²⁸ The meaning of *purpura*, according to Rockhill, p. 19, note 2, "remains uncertain", but here it apparently the term is applied to felt. Cf. Juvaini's account above.

²⁹ Rockhill, p. 19.

ever, being of other kinds of stuff;"³⁰ and "a wonderful tent, all of red, purple, a present of the Kitayans."³¹ Carpini and his companions were taken first to Sira-Orda, where they remained "for a good four weeks,"³² being kept for the most part outside the wooden paling with the other ambassadors but being called inside on at least one occasion and given mead to drink because they refused koumyss. Carpini was "under the impression that the election [of Güyük] was made there, though it was not proclaimed."³³ At the end of the four weeks the whole assembly left Sira-Orda and rode to a place "three to four leagues [i.e. 9–12 miles] distant, where there was a fine large plain near a river flowing between mountains."³⁴ Here the Golden Orda was set up and here the enthronement ceremony was to have taken place in the 15th of August; it was, however, deferred on account of a violent hailstorm and finally took place on the 24th. It was here too that the Pope's envoys were received in audience by the new Emperor. They were taken finally to the "Kitayan" pavilion, inferior neither in size nor in magnificence to the other two. Örmegütü, apparently the name of the whole area within which the three pavilions were set up, lay, according to Carpini's account,³⁵ a half day's journey, i.e. some 10–15 miles from Qara-Qorum, and since, in order to reach it, the Great Khan passed through Tuzγu-Balıq on the east side the town, it must be sought somewhere in the mountains to the south-east of Qara-Qorum between the Orkhon and the Khögshin (Kögsin Foul); and the "river flowing between mountains" near "a fine large plain" could be identified with either of these, though more probably the Orkhon.

Ögedei would remain in the mountains, according to Juvaini,³⁶ "until the sun entered Virgo [i.e. the 21st August] and there was a fall of snow." The violent changes in temperature which characterize the Mongol summer are well known. In fact, as we have seen, in this very region and at this very time a great hailstorm had prevented the holding of Güyük's enthronement ceremony. Elsewhere³⁷ Carpini speaks of a heavy fall of snow in the Mongolian Altai on the

³⁰ *Op. cit.*, p. 22.

³¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 24.

³² *Op. cit.*, p. 21.

³³ *Loc. cit.*

³⁴ *Op. cit.*, pp. 21–22.

³⁵ Becquet-Hambis, p. 28.

³⁶ *HWC*, p. 239.

³⁷ Rockhill, p. 17.

29th June. "And departing from hence," Juvainī³⁸ continues, "he would arrive at his winter residence by the end of autumn, which is the beginning of their winter." He makes no mention of Ögedei's autumn residence, which, according to Rašīd al-Dīn,³⁹ was at کوسه ناوور or کوشه ناوور (d'Ohsson's "lac Keusché"⁴⁰, which was four days journey, i.e. 100–120 miles from Qara-Qorum; Rashīd⁴¹ adds, a little further on, that the Great Khan's winter quarters lay between کوسه ناوور and اوسن بول the latter being only one days journey from his capital. Of these two names the first, کوسه ناوور, like the کوسه ناوور where the princes assembled to elect Güyük to the Khanate,⁴² must be a corruption of the name which Rashīd elsewhere spells کوسکو ناوور and کوساوار ناوور. This is the Güse'ür Na'ur of the *Secret History of the Mongols*⁴³ and the *Sheng-wu ch'in-cheng lu*,⁴⁴ the lake or marsh to which Ong Khan came upon his return from his wanderings: here, according to Rašīd al-Dīn,⁴⁵ was one of his personal summer residences. In the second name, اوسن بول, the first element is apparently the Mongol *usun* "water," while the second seems to be either *bol* "be!" or (according to Blochet) a corruption of *gol* (i.e. *γoul*) "river." As to the geographical location of these two places—or bodies of water—the most plausible solution of the problem is perhaps to place Usun Bol in the extreme north and Güse'ür Na'ur in the extreme south of Örmegetü.

At Güse'ür Na'ur, according to Rašīd al-Dīn,⁴⁶ the Great Khan would stay for 40 days, i.e., assuming that he left Šira-Ordu on or about the 21st August and allowing a day or two for the journey, until the beginning of October; he then continued on his way to his winter residence, which he would reach, in Juvainī's words,⁴⁷ "by the end of autumn, which is the beginning of their winter." "His winter quarters," says Rašīd al-Dīn,⁴⁸ "were at Ongqin, where he would pass his time hunting in the تونکو and جالینکو mountains and so complete the winter." By Ongqin is obviously meant the River

³⁸ *HWC*, p. 239.

³⁹ Blochet, p. 49.

⁴⁰ II, p. 85.

⁴¹ Blochet, p. 49.

⁴² *Op. cit.*, p. 241.

⁴³ See *Campaignes*, p. 254.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 231.

⁴⁵ Alizade, p. 252. The passage is absent from Berezin's text.

⁴⁶ Blochet, p. 49.

⁴⁷ *HWC*, p. 49.

⁴⁸ Blochet, p. 49.

Ongin or rather some point along its course, perhaps the region round the present day Arbai Kheere, beyond which, in modern times at any rate, the geographical conditions are hardly suitable for prolonged habitation.⁴⁹ Ögedei's hunting ground lay "between the land of Khitai and his winter quarters,"⁵⁰ i.e. well to the south of this area. The جالينكو and تولنكو mountains, if they can still be identified, are to be looked for in the Gurban-Bogdo and Gurban-Saikhan chains in the Gobi Altai.

Ögedei spent three full months in Ongqin, presumably from mid-November until mid-February, when he would return to Qara-Qorum, halting once again at Tuzγu-Baliq, where "he would eat *tuzγu* from the town and make merry for one day. Then on the next day the people would don garments of one colour, and he would proceed from thence to Qarši, where tender youths stand before him, and for the space of a month he would devote himself to pleasure. He would open the doors of the treasuries and cause noble and base to share his general bounty; and every night he would pit archers, crossbowmen and wrestlers against one another and show favour and make presents to the winners."⁵¹

Such then would appear to have been the Great Khan's itinerary, followed year after year: from Qara-Qorum northwards to lakes or

⁴⁹ Cf. Thiel, p. 409: "Bis Arbei-Cheere . . . fließt er [der *Ongin-Gol*] in einem gut ausgebildeten Tal und besitzt eine breite Talaue, über die sich verschiedene Terrassen erheben. Bis hierher kann man ihn als Changai-Fluß bezeichnen. Unterhalb der Ortschaft zerfällt er in Arme, von denen manche sich nur beim Frühjahrs- oder Sommerhochwasser mit Wasser füllen." Somewhere in this region was the Ötegü Qulan mountain, where Ögedei died. See d'Ohs-son, II, p. 87. For a translation of the relevant passage in the *Yüan shih* (2, 7b-9a) I am again indebted to Dr. de Rachewiltz: "On the day *ting-hai* of the eleventh month (of the thirteenth year of T'ai-tsung, i.e. 7th December 1241), [the Emperor] went on a great hunt. On the day *keng-yin* (10 December) he returned to O-tsieh-ku-hu-lan Mountain. Ao-tu-la-ho-man (= 'Abd al-Rahmān) offered him liquor and the Emperor drank merrily all through the night. On the day *hsing-mao* (11 December) at dawn the Emperor died in his travelling palace." It must have been in this region that William of Rubruck reached Möngke's camp. He remarks that from the time of his party's arrival (on the 27th December, 1255) the Great Khan "never moved his carts . . . but twice toward the south; and then he began going northward, which was toward Caracarum." And he "questioned priests, who had come from Cathay, who bore witness to it, that from the place where I had found Mangu Chan to Cathay was XX days journey between south and east; while to Onan Kerule, which is the true country of the Moal, and where is the *ordu* of Chingis, was ten days due east . . ." See Rockhill, pp. 165 and 196.

⁵⁰ *HWC*, p. 29.

⁵¹ Blochet, p. 50, *Successors*, p. 64.

marshers on the Orkhon near Qara-Balyasun; then back to Qara-Qorum, eastwards into the mountainous region of Örmegetü between the Orkhon and the Khögshin Gol; then southwards to Güse'ür Na'ur, still apparently in the same region; then southwards again to some point on the Ongin and to his hunting grounds in the Gobi Altai; and then finally, at the end of winter, northwards again to Qara-Qorum.

Abbreviations

Alizade	<i>Fazlallāh Rašīd al-Dīn Džāme' al-Tavārīx</i> . Vol. I, Part 1. Ed. A. A. Romaskevich, A. A. Khetagurov and A. A. Alizade. Moscow, 1965.
Altan Tobči	<i>The Mongol Chronicle Altan Tobči</i> . Ed. and transl. Charles Bawden. Wiesbaden, 1955.
Becquet-Hambis	Jean de Plan Carpin: <i>Histoire des Mongols</i> . Transl. and annot. Dom Jean Becquet and Louis Hambis. Paris, 1965.
Blochet	<i>Djami el-Tévarikh, Histoire générale du monde</i> par Fadl Allah Rashid al-Din. Ed. E. Blochet Leiden and London, 1911.
Cleaves 1952	Francis Woodman Cleaves: "The Sino-Mongolian Inscription of 1346." HJAS, 15/1-2 (1952).
Doerfer	Gerhard Doerfer: <i>Türkische und mongolische Elemente im Neupersischen</i> . 3 vols. Wiesbaden, 1963, 1965 and 1967.
HJAS	<i>Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies</i> .
Howorth	Sir H. H. Howorth: <i>History of the Mongols</i> . 4 vols. London, 1876-1927.
HWC	<i>The History of the World-Conqueror</i> by cAla-al-Din cAta-Malik Juvaini. Transl. John Andrew Boyle 2 vols. Manchester, 1958.
D'Ohsson	C. d'Ohsson: <i>Histoire des Mongols depuis Tchinguiz-Khan jusqu'à Timour Bey on Tamerlan</i> . 2nd ed. 4 vols. The Hague and Amsterdam, 1843-5.
Olschki	Leonardo Olschki: <i>Guillaume Boucher: a French Artist at the Court of the Khans</i> . Baltimore, 1946.
Polo I	Paul Pelliot: <i>Notes on Marco Polo</i> . Vol. I. Paris, 1959.
Rockhill	<i>The Journey of William of Rubruck to the Eastern Parts of the World, 1253-55</i> , as narrated by himself. Transl. and ed. William Woodville Rockhill, London, 1900.
Successors	<i>The Successors of Genghis Khan</i> . Transl. J. A. Boyle. New York and London, 1971.
Thiel	Erich Thiel: <i>Die Mongolei's Land, Volk und Wirtschaft der mongolischen Volksrepublik</i> . Munich, 1958.
Verkhovsky	<i>Rašīd-al-Dīn Sbornik letopisei</i> . Vol. II. Transl. Y. P. Verkhovsky and B. J. Pankratov and ed. I. P. Petrushevsky. Moscow-Leningrad, 1960.
Yule	<i>The Book of Ser Marco Polo</i> . Transl. and ed. Sir Henry Yule. 3rd. ed. 2 vols. London, 1903.